



Bill Bartlett, Pease Development Authority chairman and long-time resident of Kingston:

"Make an attractive community and people will come."

Bill Bartlett's love of New Hampshire is about opportunity and roots. "People want to progress in this world. And you want your kids to have jobs and stay in New Hampshire," observes Bartlett, who has lived in Kingston more than 50 years. Having raised his family here, he is pleased that three of his four children were able to build homes and put down their own roots in Kingston. The fourth lives in Manchester. It distresses him to see many young people leaving their family and community ties because they cannot afford to live in the towns where they grew up. Opportunity for younger generations who choose to stay in the community and participate in community institutions and activities is part of the traditional social fabric of New Hampshire cities and towns.

That fabric of local roots and commitment to community is at risk throughout New Hampshire for two very different reasons, Bartlett observes, depending on where you live. In the southern and central areas that have benefited from a strong economy in recent years, the challenge is providing homes for people of all income groups. For other regions, particularly the North Country, the challenge is providing economic and social opportunity. "Up north, you can bring up your kids and educate them, and then never see them again," due to lack of opportunity, Bartlett notes. "We need to look at the transportation corridor all the way to Colebrook."

Bartlett does not see economic growth and quality of life as mutually exclusive. "Make an attractive community, and people will come," he counsels. Bartlett makes three key points about how to accomplish that goal:

- Community government must function well, be hospitable to business, and understand the need to work with neighboring towns.
- Provide an arrangement for entrepreneurs to buy and fix up run-down buildings in town, with a three- to four-year grace period from tax increases.
- Communities need to "get developers to use aesthetic guidelines and build homes of architectural variety," says Bartlett, who earlier in his career was himself a residential developer.